

December 20, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On Monday, Nippon Steel announced their acquisition of union-led manufacturing icon U.S. Steel. I write to express my concern over how this potential deal will impact American workers and our domestic industrial base. I urge you to direct your Administration to utilize applicable authorities to ensure a comprehensive review of the proposed acquisition and its impacts, and to take action to ensure the future of U.S. steel is one that benefits American workers and the U.S. economy.

The domestic steel industry is critical to our nation's infrastructure, our national security, and our global competitiveness. Tens of thousands of Americans, including many Ohioans, rely on this industry for good-paying, middle class jobs. These workers deserve to work for a company that invests in its employees and not only honors their right to join a union, but respects and collaborates with its workforce. Given Nippon Steel's failure to consult or even notify the United Steelworkers (USW) in advance of its acquisition announcement, I have serious concerns that they are not that company.

The Administration has a number of tools at its disposal to ensure a robust, regulatory review of this proposed acquisition. I urge you to utilize the authorities available to you to evaluate what Nippon Steel's purchase of U.S. Steel would mean for its workforce, for the security of our supply chain and industrial base, for our national security, and for our capacity to export American steel. This should include an evaluation of potentially applicable antitrust authorities and a review by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to assess any national security risks the transaction may pose.

It is critical that the Administration act with urgency to carefully analyze the deal between Nippon Steel and U.S. Steel and determine if the proposed acquisition is in the best interest of U.S. workers, consumers, and national security. Recent statements from Nippon indicate that its acquisition of U.S. Steel will enhance Japanese economic security. Any strategic benefits to Japan arising from this acquisition must not come at the expense of U.S. economic security or worker rights. In addition, the Administration should consider what impact this proposed deal would have on the United States' capacity to utilize trade enforcement mechanisms designed to preserve and protect American workers and U.S.-based companies. Nippon Steel's proposed acquisition could have a disadvantageous impact on existing 232 authorities and antidumping and countervailing duties (AD/CVD), as the company already maintains an extensive track record of unfair trade practices to the detriment of U.S. workers. We should be focused on ways to strengthen our trade enforcement mechanisms, not allowing foreign companies to hollow them out by acquiring American companies over the objection of their union workforces.

Ohio steelworkers understand what symbiosis between a company and its union-represented workforce means: more Ohioans who are financially secure and have protected time to spend with their families. We know that when companies view their workers as partners and pursue those collaborations, they become more innovative, productivity increases, employee retention is strengthened, and the standard of living in communities improves. As we transition toward a 21st century economy, the companies best positioned to thrive will be those that make these types of investments in their workers. So far, Nippon Steel has demonstrated that they intend to be a company that ignores rather than embraces the voice of their workers, as evidenced by its failure to engage USW or other stakeholders and its decision not to notify the union of its dealings with U.S. Steel in advance of Monday's announcement.

As you work to review the potential implications of this proposed acquisition and consider existing authorities to safeguard the future of our domestic steel industry, I urge you to act assertively and in the best interest of U.S. workers. As a nation, we should hope to see a future of work where American companies and workers succeed together; the nation's steelworkers deserve nothing less.

Thank you in advance for your prompt and thorough attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrod Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator